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Newsletter

GRADUATE SCHOOL ★ USDA

Washington, D. C.

May 29, 1950

To the Faculty, Committee Members and others associated with the Graduate School:

Educational counseling must be tempered wisely to give impetus to those who are becalmed on-course as well as direction to those who are in full sail at circles. Surely there's a third purpose--to help the individual realize his limitations.

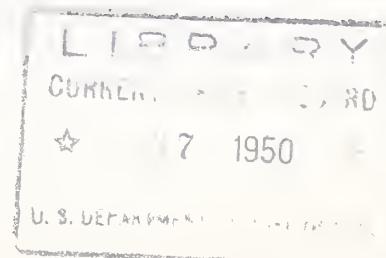
Counseling for Federal employees is certainly one of GS's most valuable contributions. Helping an individual clarify his educational objectives, and reviewing with him the pertinent educational channels and courses, to the end that he makes an intelligent choice based on known facts, is a service expanding year by year. From both the departmental and field services come requests from those who seek assistance in planning a graduate program, in choosing an appropriate institution, in selecting a helpful course, and in other educational problems.

Many an adult who has decided that further education will assist in progress toward his personal goal is too often unfamiliar with available resources. Or, familiar with them, he exercises little care in choosing education best suited to his needs. Frequently the results are wasted time and an even greater handicap in a feeling of frustration.

Praise no Rarity for GS, but Here's Rare Praise

"As I now look back over the years of my connections in the Department, some of my very happiest and most pleasant memories are centered around my associations in the work for the Graduate School. I enjoyed that work even far more than I realized at the time. It was with a heavy heart that I gave up the course (Principles of Editing), and because of my love for it I just had to attend several of the sessions this last fall."--Lifted, but not "out of context" from a letter from Dr. Merrill. This praise is particularly flattering for it was written at Key West, a spot he terms the "Earthly paradise of Retirees" and from where all else might well appear unsavory by comparison.

May 29, 1950



Hutchinson Named to GS Board

Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Knox T. Hutchinson has been named as a member of GS's General Administration Board by Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan. Assistant Secretary Hutchinson's keen interest in education and his full academic background assure him a warm welcome from all of GS. Mr. Hutchinson replaces former Under Secretary Albert J. Loveland. The Board now consists of: T. Roy Reid, Hugh H. Bennett, Philip V. Cardon, Ivy W. Duggan, C. O. Henderson, Knox T. Hutchinson, Lyle F. Watts, Oris V. Wells, Claude R. Wickard and M. L. Wilson.

Is Your Course a Hit?

Picture yourself as an instructor at a front-ranking university. Perhaps you've taught one year. Your course outline, your point of emphasis, even your technique is still fluid. Naturally you wonder how you're doing. So when you hear that the "Critique" is coming off the press, chances are your ears will tingle until you've seen what they've written. Whether it rings gloriously about how your "tremendous powers of perception and insight are brought to bear upon a wide range of significant problems in fresh and creative ways," or whether it knells painfully that your lectures are "inadequately organized, ineffectually delivered...", that while you are considered "perceptive" and "informed" your course could profit by better correlation of its parts and more organization within lectures, which should be on a higher level." Maybe you'll still be wondering if they are saying that your "analyses are considered very sound and quite fair," and you, yourself, "appear" to be very interested in your course. Who are they? They are the student editors who prepare "Critique of the Humanities", self-labeled "a synthesis of student academic opinion fabricated to aid the undergraduate to plan not only an interesting but also a coherent course of study." The "Critique" covers some 200 courses and claims that the process involves "the solicitation and assimilation of opinion from nearly 2500 students and 250 members of the faculty" at Yale University.

"Not the System, But the Person"

While Anna Paniczko, GS instructor in shorthand maintains that the human element is the first consideration in turning out superlative stenographers, the record of her speed class in advanced shorthand shows her to be a teaching master of systems as well. Of the 24 students under her instruction this semester, 11 have won one or more medals for successfully passing official tests for speed and accuracy. Such prize winning was climaxed recently when three candidates became winners of the coveted Gregg Expert award. These gold medals are rewards for having taken 175 words per minute for 5 minutes and transcribing them with an accuracy of 95 percent or better.

Ed Robinson with 97 percent accuracy, Mary Kelly, 96 percent, and Helen Paniczko, 95 percent, make up the trio which successfully demonstrated its speed and skill in an official test, clinically conducted under the critical eye of a Gregg representative. Miss Paniczko explains that the tests do more than measure a candidate's ability to hear and

record swiftly what impressions come to mind--they also challenge one's poise and reserve, for the minimum allowable errors (typos count too) in the final copy means that the candidate must be capable of even greater speed. Apparently, such accuracy is possible only at what might be called a top "cruising" pace.

Success Means Sticking

One practical advantage of the new Gregg simplified system of shorthand, now a year old at GS, is the feature that progress is surer and thus the mortality rate among beginners is happily cut down. There is less memory work, fewer tricky short forms, and more "writing out" as sounds are heard, explains instructor Kathryn Wilkey.

Brookings Book Wins Willkie Award

Major Problems of United States Foreign Policy 1949-1950, published by the Brookings Institution, has been selected for the "Willkie Award" as the best publication of the year in international relations. "Willkie Award" selections are made by the committee on awards of the American Political Science Association. Available on the GS stacks in the USDA Library, the 300 page volume is third in a series of annual Brookings publications prepared with a double objective: First to aid in the development of an informed and responsible American public opinion on foreign policy; and second, to aid in the training of the increasing number of specialists in international relations required today in government, in business and in other agencies operating abroad.

The book covers three aspects of international relations, centering first on the position of the United States in world affairs; secondly, major problems confronting the United States in mid-summer 1949 are reviewed; while the final section is devoted to an analysis of selected problem papers.

Independents Learn Science Swiftly and Well

How do students who successfully carry out independent, accelerated study at the college level compare with those students who proceed at the "normal" rate? Michigan State College (as reported in the April 1, 1950 issue of School and Society) conducted survey to determine the performance of "accelerated" and "non-accelerated" students in advanced science courses.

The study revealed that accelerated students knew a great deal more biological science than did non-accelerated students on the basis of actual scores made on the comprehensive biological science examinations taken prior to enrollment in botany and zoology. The performance (term grades) of the accelerated students was also better than that of the non-accelerated students. Both differences were statistically significant.

It was suggested that students who successfully carry out independent, accelerated study at the freshman and sophomore level should not be penalized when transferring to professional schools in the junior or senior years.

Competition Keen in Photographic Exhibit

Did you see the annual exhibit of the Photographic Roundtable in the Patio? More than 70 prints and slides were entered in the competition. According to R. G. Hainsworth, Photographic Committee Chairman, prizewinners had to have "something outstanding." Prizes for 1st., 2nd., 3rd., and honorable mention were awarded to those whose entry rated highest in portrait, general, pictorial, and color slide competition.

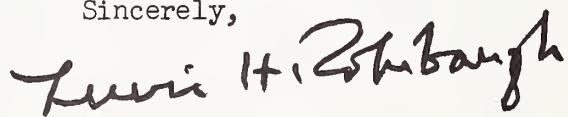
For the coming year Roundtable officers will be: President, Jack Kleiman (Federal Security Agency); 1st Vice-President, William A. Moore (Army); 2nd. Vice-President, George Mumford (FBI); 3rd. Vice-President, Burton Faust, Commerce; Secretary, Clinton Young (Navy); and Historian, Vera Roberts (British Embassy). Elbridge C. Purdy of the Department of Technology acts as counselor for the Photographic Roundtable.

"Pernicious Academia"

One by one our wonder drugs and improved techniques are reducing the toll taken by maladies that have plagued mankind. Thus it is disconcerting when an affliction of an insidious nature and growing import is pointed out as spreading unchecked. This is what Norman Cousins has called that "highly contagious disease of the ivory tower--pernicious academia." But while the theme of Mr. Cousins' essay on "The Whole Man" appearing in the NEA Journal for April, is not pleasant, he does suggest a cure. And he contends that one is desperately needed for an educational system which turns out the "specialist," who, examined outside his field of training, is "like a loosely sewn baseball that falls apart at the first crack of the bat."

Alarmed at the "fast-widening gap between formal education and the requirements of a world community," Mr. Cousins suggests that we re-examine the framework of college training--perhaps lengthen it to include the prerequisites of a whole man. Further, he probes the "intellectual retreat that sets in after graduation,"--that period in which a mind ceases to grow and becomes instead a "cerebral cocoon". Pointedly, the Saturday Review of Literature Editor asks if "a medical diploma, awarded in 1920... automatically assures the public of a physician's competence in the revolutionary new techniques and concepts developed since that time?" Here he calls for expansion of facilities for keeping adults--both specialists and laymen--in educational trim. Mr. Cousins concludes that we can reasonably "expect education to furnish the individual with the necessary intellectual, social, moral, and technical clothing for a presentable appearance in the world community."

Sincerely,



Director